

BLM LIBRARY



88068136



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

May 1992



Vale District Planning Update for the Jordan Resource Area



HD
243
.07
J6743
1992
c.2

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 50, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

BLM-OR-EA-92-12-1792

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918



May 1992



Planning Update

Introduction -

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Vale District and other Oregon BLM districts provide the Resource Management Plan (RMP) or Management Framework Plan (MFP) Planning Update to support public notification and involvement concerning BLM management. The update is part of an effort to keep you better informed and involved, and assist you with understanding BLM land management proposals and decisions. This process will also facilitate BLM's decisionmaking through ongoing land use planning and implementation.



*Looking south towards Nevada in the Desolation Point WSA**

In general, this update summarizes progress toward implementation of the Southern Malheur Resource Area MFP (Southern Malheur Resource Area changed its name to Jordan Resource Area on October 1, 1988). Previous progress reports/rangeland program summaries were issued in

December 1986 and January 1991, and the first Jordan Resource Area Planning Update was published in September of 1991. This update contains work accomplishments for fiscal year 1991 (10/1/90 to 9/30/91), and anticipated achievements for fiscal year 1992 (10/1/91 to 9/30/92).

What You Can Find In This Document

The Jordan Resource Area MFP Planning Update is developed annually. While a flexible update format will be maintained, major sections like those described below will be included in each edition.

Feature Report: Reports in this section highlight topics of concern or high public interest within the Jordan Resource Area, and may include major accomplishments completed the previous year or upcoming events. The feature report in this edition describes recreation on the Owyhee River.

Summary of Work: This section identifies accomplishments for each major resource program for the previous fiscal year (1991).

Program Initiatives: The purpose of this section is to

describe areas of emphasis for each major resource program during the upcoming fiscal year (1992).

Environmental Assessment Register: This register includes a list of environmental assessments (EAs) which may be completed in fiscal year 1992 or beyond. This information is included to facilitate public participation in analyzing impacts of proposed on-the-ground actions and designing site-specific measures for implementation.

Vale District Mailing List: This section includes an address verification space and a check-off list of resource and activity categories for you to indicate your primary areas of interest.

Maintaining an updated mailing list of interested individuals, groups and organizations is essential for effective public contact and involvement.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

VALE DISTRICT

GENERAL LOCATION MAP



● BLM State Office

▼ BLM District Office

▽ BLM Area Office

— District Boundary

- - - Resource Area Boundary

VALE DISTRICT OFFICE

Government Printing Office regulations require BLM to periodically verify the accuracy and need for mailing lists. We want to reduce mailing address errors and only keep those individuals and groups on our lists that are actively interested in the Vale District's resource programs and issues.

Address Verification

To maintain the accuracy of the mailing list, please print you name and address (legibly) including zip code in the space provided below. This information will be compared to existing information in the District's mailing list which will be corrected, if necessary.

Return To:

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

Resource Programs/Issues

The following categories currently exist on the District's mailing list. Please circle resource programs or issues which you would like to receive information. Should you receive other "Yearly Update" document from the Vale District, it is necessary to send only one mailing list insert.

Cultural - Native American Coordination
Cultural - Oregon Trail
Cultural - General

Environ. Analysis - EA Register (refer to the EA Register section of this document).

Fire - General
Fire - Fire Suppression

Forestry - General
Forestry - Timber Sales

Minerals - 3802 Plan of Operation
Minerals - 3809 Plan of Operation
Minerals - Grassy Mtn. Project*

Noxious Weeds - General

Planning - Resource Management Plans
Planning - Baker Yearly RMP Updates
Planning - Jordan Yearly MFP Updates
Planning - Malheur Yearly MFP Updates

Procurement - Contracting
Procurement - Small Lot Sales

Range Management - General

Recreation - General
Recreation - Off Road Vehicles
Recreation - Backcountry Byways

Special Manag. Areas - Research Natural Areas,
Areas of Environmental Concern
Outstanding Natural Areas

Water Quality - General

Wilderness - General

Wild Horse - General

Wildlife - General

Wild/Scenic River - Grand Ronde River
Wild/Scenic River - Owhyee River
Wild/Scenic River - Powder River
Wild/Scenic River - Wallowa Study River
Wild/Scenic River - N. Fork Malheur River

FEATURE ARTICLE—

Recreation in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River System

An exceptional example of our nation's truly "Wild" rivers is found in the BLM's Jordan Resource Area—not on one river, but on three rivers. The Main Owyhee, North Fork, and West Little Owyhee Rivers provide outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation and are recognized through both state and federal designations. The corridor's remote location, pristine terrain and feeling of solitude allow the visitor to experience a wild river on an unsurpassed scale.



Owyhee River Canyon on the Three Forks to Rome section.

State and Congressional Designations

Protection of the Owyhee River's unique resources officially began in 1970 with the Oregon state designation of Scenic Waterway. The Owyhee Scenic Waterway includes two sections totalling 70 miles of river. The first section runs from the Oregon/Idaho border to Three Forks (25 miles) and the second from Crooked Creek to Birch Creek (45 miles).

In 1984 Congress designated 120 miles of the Owyhee as a Wild and Scenic River making it apart of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). The federal designation begins at the Oregon/Idaho border and ends at the slack water of the Owyhee Reservoir, excluding 14 miles of the Rome Valley. The entire 120 miles is classified as a "Wild" river.

Two tributaries of the Owyhee River, the North Fork and West Little Owyhee, were added to the NWSRS as

"Wild" rivers in 1988. The North Fork includes 10 miles from the Oregon/Idaho border to the Owyhee River, and the West Little includes 56 miles from its headwaters to the Owyhee River.

Recreation Activities

Whitewater boating, both commercial and non-commercial, is by far the most popular recreation within the Owyhee River System. However, outdoor enthusiasts also visit the area for camping, backpacking, photography, fishing, hunting, nature study, viewing wildlife, sightseeing, rock climbing, horseback riding and rockhounding.

Commercial outfitter, Prince Helfrich, led the earliest recorded recreation based float trip on the Owyhee in 1951. Prince floated from Three Forks to Rome using World War II Army surplus rafts. Floatboating on the Owyhee remained extremely light through the 1950s

and 1960s. Increases in visitation during the early 1970s prompted BLM to begin a seasonal river ranger program. Presently, for "normal" water yield approximately 2,000 floatboaters can be expected to visit the Owyhee each spring. While the preferred craft is a medium-size raft due to bolder strewn rapids and the possibility of several portages, some visitors float the river in kayaks, canoes and drift boats.

The majority of visitors float the Owyhee River to run rapids, view the majestic scenery and camp at primitive sites. However, archaeological and historical sites and canyon hiking provide further adventure and diversity to a river trip. Fishing on the Owyhee is described as good when the water is clear and poor when it is muddy. Hunting ranges from good to excellent for mule deer, bighorn sheep (special hunts), chukar partridge, and quail.

North Fork and West Little Owyhee River canyons both feature high quality no-trail backpacking and day-hiking opportunities. The rugged canyons' beautiful scenery and variety of wildlife provide a perfect setting for photography and nature study. Other popular activities include fishing and swimming in the cold water pools. The North Fork canyon provides better hunting opportunities than the West Little due to its abundant wildlife cover and wider corridor. High potential exists for horseback riding and rock climbing within each canyon. The upper reaches of the West Little and lower section of the North Fork are ideal for exploration on horseback, while rock climbers can test their skills on the basalt cliffs of either canyon. In addition, expert kayakers float a 13-mile North Fork run, starting at North Fork campground in Idaho and ending at the confluence with the Owyhee at Three Forks.

Season of Use

The Owyhee float season can begin as early as the end of February, and last until the end of July. However, cold unpredictable weather in February inhibits use, while water levels in July are adequate only for kayaks and canoes. Water flow and length of season depends on runoff rates, which will vary from year to year. Boaters usually prefer the better weather in May and June, making these months the busiest. In 1991, for example, 75 percent of the river float trips were in May and June. The most active weekend is consistently Memorial Day.

Seven of the past 10 years have been below "normal" water runoff years for floatboaters. During this time, highly skilled boaters using small to medium size rafts have pushed the limits of their abilities and equipment to successfully float the river at levels as low as 500 to 600 cubic feet per second (cfs).

Floating (expert kayak) on the North Fork occurs during the spring runoff. This is the only time of the year that the North Fork carries enough water for floating. The BLM has no record of boating on the West Little, but any attempt would be limited to the spring runoff.

Also, spring is the best time of the year for other activities such as viewing the desert lushness and wildflowers. Backpackers, hikers and fisherman prefer the summer and fall. Numerous river crossings in the canyons lead these ambitious outdoor enthusiasts to select the seasons of warm weather and low water levels.

River Planning

The Owyhee River Management Plan is being revised to update management prescriptions and include the North Fork and West Little Owyhee Rivers to provide for site-specific management needs on these rivers. This National Wild and Scenic Owyhee River System Management Plan will continue to preserve the free-flowing nature of the river system and provide protection and enhancement for resource values and visitor services.

The draft management plan and environmental assessment will be available for public review this Spring with the final plan scheduled for completion this Summer.

The management plan will provide direction to maintain the Owyhee River System's primitive and wild characteristics. In fact, the unique combination of characteristics on this river system is found only on a minority of the nation's rivers. It is the goal of the Jordan Resource Area to manage these specially designated wild and scenic rivers to provide for the protection and enjoyment of their outstanding resources now and into the future.



SUMMARY OF WORK

The Preferred Land Use Alternative document (March 14, 1983) for the Northern and Southern Malheur Resource Areas identifies the Land Use Planning (LUP) decisions for the Jordan Resource Area. The Land Use Alternative also identifies supplemental land use decisions for livestock and wilderness programs as contained in the Rangeland Program Summary and Wilderness EIS respectively. Identifying all land use planning decisions for the Jordan Resource Area requires review of the 1983 Preferred Land Use Alternative, Southern Malheur Rangeland Program Summary (January 1984), Southern Malheur Grazing Management Program Draft EIS (1983), Final Southern Malheur Grazing Management EIS (September 1983), and the Oregon Wilderness EIS (December 1989).

1991 PROGRAM SUMMARY

Range Management

The Jordan Resource Area continued to emphasize the monitoring program, allotment evaluations, project implementation and use supervision during the 1991 grazing season. This emphasis supports the Preferred Use Alternative in allocating forage and achieving the management objectives to provide for a sustained yield over time and also protect soils, forage plants and watershed values.

Monitoring for utilization and actual use was conducted on eight "I" (improved) and twenty-two "M" (maintain) allotments which represent all of the "I" and "M" allotments in the resource area. Of the 30 allotments, two "I" and six "M" allotments were monitored for trend and climate preliminary to evaluations scheduled between late winter and early spring of 1992.

The evaluation process starts with the compilation of monitoring data and development of a draft evaluation

document. Usually between January and April, evaluation "round table" meetings are held with resource area specialists of various programs such as wildlife, recreation, and wilderness. During these meetings we review the draft evaluation, discuss whether or not management objectives are



Herefords grazing in the crested wheatgrass Soldier Creek seeding.

being met, address concerns or issues, and make recommendations. The draft evaluation is then reviewed with the affected grazing permittee whose comments and recommendations are considered in preparing the final evaluation document. The area manager signs the evaluation to indicate its finalization.

Allotment evaluations were conducted on one "I" and seven "M" allotments in 1991; however, only one is finalized (see Appendix A for Whitehorse Allotment Evaluation). The other seven evaluations (Campbell, Anderson, Bowden Hills, Ten Mile Seeding, Saddle Butte, Coyote Lake and West Cow Creek) have been through the meeting process and are expected to be finalized this spring.

In 1991, the third and last adjustment in active grazing preference was implemented in the McCormick Allotment. This completes the adjustment identified in the 1986 Range Program Summary Update as a result of implementing the Southern Malheur Resource Area Preferred Land Use Alternative and Environmental Impact Statement. No other adjustments in active preference occurred in 1991.

Range improvements were a large portion of the range program workload in 1991. Because this fiscal year was the final year of additional funding for the Trout Creek's Geographical Emphasis Area, a strong effort was made to finish the major projects (see Appendix A for listing of completed projects). Most projects were in the Whitehorse Butte and 15-Mile Common allotments.

The Whitehorse Butte Allotment Management Plan (AMP) was completed and signed in September of 1991, signifying the end of the planning phase and the beginning of the implementation and monitoring phase for this allotment. No other AMPs were completed or revised in 1991. The Zimmerman Allotment Environmental Assessment (EA) was developed and sent to affected interests for comment in October of 1991. The final decision for this EA, expected the summer of 1992, has been delayed to complete consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the management of the Lahontan Cutthroat trout, which is federally listed as a threatened species.

Continuing drought conditions in 1991 prompted voluntary adjustments of livestock grazing in most allotments. Many pastures were in non-use due to the lack of water and, in some cases, forage. Other pastures had reduced grazing numbers and/or season of use. These adjustments were accomplished by agreement with excellent coordination and cooperation of the grazing permittees, precluding the need to issue any grazing decisions.

Use supervision was emphasized in 1991 as the drought affected the capacities of virtually all allotments. Although there was an unusual amount of non-use by the permittees, the areas that were grazed presented problems for both the

permittees and BLM. Forage production in some areas was down and many traditional water sources were dry. This situation required constant monitoring to ensure that forage capacities were not exceeded. Due to periodic control for areas of concern and the assistance of grazing permittees, no problems occurred.

Wilderness

The wilderness program in the Jordan Resource Area continues to be a high priority. All Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are patrolled on the ground at least once monthly during the field season, and many are subject to several patrols per month. Ground patrols are conducted by motor vehicle or mountain bike on roads and ways, backpacking or day hikes for cross country treks and floatboat on rivers. Also, two aerial patrols this year provided WSA surveillance and employee orientation.

The major focus on WSA interim management was in the Trout Creek Mountains Group of WSAs, primarily due to the Whitehorse Butte Allotment Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. New projects were constructed in several of the WSAs and old projects were improved. Projects included fences, spring developments and enclosures, water trough relocation and riparian fencing. All projects met interim management requirements and were completed in fiscal year 1991. The Trout Creek WSAs will continue to receive emphasis due to the verification (October, 1991) of the Lahontan cutthroat trout, a federally threatened species, within several of its streams. Efforts to determine appropriate management strategies are currently underway.

The Oregon Statewide Wilderness Study Reports were completed this fiscal year and submitted to the BLM Director for approval. The reports to Congress recommend wilderness designation for all or portions of 13 WSAs encompassing 627,491 acres located entirely or partially in the resource area. The statewide WSA recommendation package was submitted to, and signed by, the Secretary of the Interior at the beginning of fiscal year 1992, and now awaits the President's approval and signature before being submitted to Congress.

Wildlife

The emphasis in the wildlife program continues to be on vegetation management due its critical need by all wildlife, including both game and non-game species. Big game animals of special importance within the Jordan Resource Area include mule deer, pronghorn antelope and bighorn sheep. Game bird species inhabiting the area include chukar partridge, sage grouse, California quail, mourning dove and waterfowl.



Canada geese drop in at Bastch Lakes during the spring.

The resource area biologist monitors vegetation utilization on an annual basis through browse transects and allotment inspections. Information derived from this monitoring is helpful for both BLM and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) during their management evaluations.

Several wildlife enhancing projects located throughout the resource area were completed during this past year. Accomplishments include reconstruction of Rock Creek Reservoir Dam which was originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the early 1940s. The reservoir provides excellent waterfowl habitat during times of inadequate stream flow.

Another accomplishment was fencing to exclude cattle on several upland meadows in the Oregon Canyon Mountains. These exclosures will allow recovery of native vegetation in meadows which are important habitat for wildlife, especially sage grouse in this area. Water for livestock use is piped to troughs off the immediate meadow site.

Riparian habitat improvement has been the main subject of management within the Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountain area near McDermitt. Through agreement with the livestock operators, high elevation ranges in this area have not been used by cattle for three years. Fencing and water developments were completed during the past year. Many major streams in these mountains were rephotographed during the early summer months, using low-level aerial color infrared techniques. This is the third such documentation of the riparian condition of these waters. In addition, 15

permanent riparian transects are run each summer by the resource area biologist. In summary, the area has some of the best and most intensive monitoring data available.

One of the most significant findings concerns the native cutthroat trout found in the Trout Creek Mountains. This trout,

previously identified as Willow/Whitehorse cutthroat, has been determined to be Lahontan cutthroat trout which is a federally-listed threatened species.

Recreation

Recreation use is increasing on public lands and waterways within the Jordan Resource Area. This growth is attributed primarily to a widespread public awareness of primitive backcountry opportunities for recreation.

Drought conditions resulting in below normal water flows restricted the number of floatboat permits this year. Fifteen commercial outfitters applied for and received Special Recreation Permits for the Owyhee, but only six actually floated the river. Commercial use for 1991 totalled 603 visitor days, while non-commercial use (which does not require a permit) totalled 788 visitor days. BLM river patrols were effective in providing visitor service, river clean-up, regulation compliance, and resource protection.

The Rome Launch Site on the Owyhee River was upgraded in fiscal year 1991. Tree planting, lawn seeding, facility painting, installation of new fire grills and a drip irrigation system were welcomed improvements at Rome. Personnel stationed at Rome during the spring and summer provided visitor service and facility maintenance. Other river program accomplishments included search and rescue, signing of access routes, updating of the boating guide, and road improvement work on the Three Forks Road.

The developed properties BLM acquired on the Owyhee, known as Birch Creek Ranch area, came under BLM management in March of 1991. A BLM caretaker is stationed at the site to provide visitor service, as well as facility and grounds maintenance, and to prevent vandalism. The State Historic Preservation Office concurs with the BLM in determining the Birch Creek Ranch area as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Birch Creek Road and Ranch area is available for use by the recreating public.

Updating the National Wild and Scenic Owyhee River System Management Plan began in fiscal year 1989 and continued through 1991. The updated plan incorporates management of the Owyhee River (including Birch Creek Ranch), West Little Owyhee River, and North Fork of the Owyhee River. These rivers were Congressionally designated as wild rivers within the National Wild and Scenic River (NWSR) System in 1984, 1988 and 1988 respectively. Such designation requires that special management be given to protect the remarkable river environments.

Patrols were performed in the North Fork and West Little Owyhee River Canyons to gather data and also provide resource protection and visitor service. Ground patrols such as these will be a routine part of the NWSR management program for the Owyhee System.

A Watchable Wildlife Loop Road (WWLR) was selected in Jordan Resource Area. The loop consists of Soldier Creek Road, Three Forks Road and U.S. Highway 95. A site plan and brochure were drafted for the Soldier Creek WWLR in fiscal year 1991. Another site plan was drafted for the Willow Creek Hot Springs site to determine and implement appropriate management actions for this high use area.

An interpretive sign is being designed for the currently blank side of the Taylor Grazing sign on U.S. Highway 95. Resource area personnel are coordinating with the Oregon State Office interpretive staff to provide recreation information along with interpretation on cultural, geology, wildlife and other resources.

Minerals

The minerals program remains small and diverse. Jordan Resource Area personnel designated 27 community mineral material pits, all of which were existing sources currently being used, and which meet the needs of BLM, Malheur County Road District and Irrigation District. Resource area personnel also processed one Notice of Intent for Mining Exploration, and conducted one inspection of existing mining claims and one surface management enforcement. Four Free Use Permits were issued for gravel in 1991 to the Malheur County Road District and Irrigation District. A number of five-year Free Use Permits, issued in past years by the Vale District, are monitored annually. Currently, the resource area has no mineral leasing activity.

Cultural Resources

During 1991, cultural resource inventories were completed for 100 projects located on public lands administered by Jordan Resource Area. Total inventory acreage came to 1,850, of which 1,731 acres were surveyed by resource area archaeologists, and 119 acres by private contractors. The inventory efforts recorded 46 cultural sites, none of which were adversely affected by BLM construction or management activities. Where conflicts with other resources occurred, mandated consultation was initiated with the State Historic Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The historic stage station recorded last year was fenced and an interpretive sign developed to assist with preventing further deterioration. Also, the text has been written for five other historic site interpretive signs. Management plans providing direction and guidance are drafted for The-Hole-in-the-Ground Petroglyph Site and other sites along the Owyhee River. In addition, the resource area archaeologists initiated full-scale recording, including transit mapping, for The-Hole-in-the-Ground Petroglyph Site.



Petroglyphs on basalt bolder along the Owyhee River.

There were 20 archeological sites patrolled and monitored during the year. One possible violation of the Archeological Resources Protection Act was investigated although the site was not damaged.

Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

Desert kit fox were inventoried by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) during 1991, and when possible, the resource area biologist worked with ODFW biologists. Kit fox are at their northern-most range in the Whitehorse Desert/Burns Junction area. These populations are small but apparently stable. A lack of preferred habitat (e.g., stabilized sand dunes) appears to be the most limiting factor to fox populations within the resource area.

The Vale District employed Jennifer Yruegas, a senior at the Nyssa High School, as a cooperative education employee during the summer. She continued her work on the ecology of a sensitive plant, *Lepidium dasysii*, that is not known to grow anywhere else in the world but on several dry lake beds in the Jordan Resource Area and adjacent southwestern Idaho.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

The Jordan Resource Area manages four Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) including the Owyhee River, Jordan Craters, Saddle Butte Lava Tubes and Whitehorse Basin. Periodically, each ACEC is visited to monitor for maintenance of its exceptional or unusual resources.

Special efforts have been implemented for several streams in the Whitehorse Basin ACEC to enhance habitat for the Lahontan cutthroat trout due to its threatened status. While the three consecutive years of non-grazing at the higher elevations has enabled good recovery trend on many of these streams, low water flow resulting from the continuing drought presents an increasing problem for this species.

Research Natural Areas

Pristine vegetation of the eastern kipuka located in the Jordan



One of several kipukas, an area of pristine vegetation surrounded by lava, located in the Jordan Craters Research Natural Area.

Craters Research Natural Area was studied during 1991. This kipuka and another to the west, are relict areas of original land (islands) surrounded by a sea of lava. Information from these sites can be used to study similar areas where various land uses occur.

Vegetation is considered pristine when its habitat has not been influenced by modern man or livestock. Nevertheless, in the kipuka there is some influence from the numerous cottontail rabbits and occasional mule deer that feed on the plants and otherwise impact the plant's habitat. The present drought conditions affect these natural sites similar to areas influenced by human activities.

Wild Horses

The four Wild Horse Herd Management Areas (HMAs) within Jordan Resource Area were monitored frequently in 1991 due to drought conditions. Water and forage availability are key indicators in determining whether emergency measures are necessary to enhance habitat for wild horses.

Due to a lack of water in the Coyote Lake HMA, approximately 96 percent of the herd left the unfenced HMA to obtain water at Willow Creek. An evaluation of the HMA, completed in January of 1991, identified the possibility of developing water sources to encourage the return and retention of the horses in the HMA. An existing well was improved by installation of a solar pumping system. Also, other water sources were maintained and operated during the summer months.

The Red Mountain Pasture fence, constructed in June of 1991, eliminates horse use along the Whitehorse Butte/Willow Butte portion of Willow Creek. However, horses continued to concentrate on a small portion of Willow Creek, outside the HMA, in the Red Mountain Pasture. After several unsuccessful attempts to move the horses north into the unfenced HMA, BLM wild horse specialists removed 203 horses to prevent further degradation of the riparian area.

The 1991 wild horse population inventories, which were completed for all four HMAs, indicated the horses were at or near the maximum management level. HMA vegetation studies show progress toward achieving and maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance between vegetation, livestock, wild horses and wildlife.

Soils and Watershed

The 1991 drought conditions and associated lack of stock water in Jordan Resource Area required major grazing reductions in some allotments. (These reductions were achieved through voluntary and cooperative efforts with permittees. See section on range program management).

Good spring rainfall improved the growth of grasses and forbs as compared to 1990, when large areas failed to green-up during the spring. Some loss of native grasses and crested wheatgrass has been noted as a result of the prolonged dry period, but generally these sites have adequate remaining grass stands that will regenerate with adequate moisture.

Riparian habitat management and monitoring continued to be a major initiative within the soil and watershed program. The majority of projected work within the Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountains was accomplished during the year. In cooperation with the resource area's wildlife program, aerial surveys were completed on a number of important streams to obtain color infrared photographs. Similar photography was accomplished in 1981 and 1987. These photos will be used in monitoring change in streamside vegetation over time. Comparing photographs between the various years assists in the detection of any vegetative changes which may necessitate management attention.



BLM firefighter extinguishes a sage brush wildfire in the Jordan Resource Area.

Land and Rights-of-Way

Although no land exchanges were completed in 1991, several are proposed for completion in future years. Two proposed exchanges involve acquisition of private lands within an area under wilderness review, in exchange for public lands not under wilderness review.

Several other land and rights-of-way actions occurred during the year. A Recreation Public Purpose Lease for an existing landfill was renewed, and four rights-of-way applications and three rights-of-way assignments were processed and granted. Also, eight agricultural trespasses were resolved, seven short-term agricultural permits were authorized, and four quarterly compliance checks were completed on one existing landfill.

Fire Management

The Fire Management Activity Plan for the Vale District guides fire management within the Jordan Resource Area. Fire suppression is conducted by BLM firefighters and through interagency agreements.

During the 1991 fire season, wildfire or man-caused (e.g., non-prescribed) fires had little effect on public land within the Jordan Resource Area. Eight non-prescribed fires burned 12.4 acres, which represented approximately 13 percent of the Vale District's acreage affected by non-prescribed fire during the year. Aside from fire-related assignments, fire crews provided valuable assistance with maintenance and construction tasks throughout the resource area.

1992 PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Range Management

The range management program will continue to emphasize proactive on-the-ground management in 1992. Use supervision and monitoring of "I" (improve) and "M" (maintain) allotments will receive the most emphasis. Specifically, the Trout Creek area—including the Whitehorse Butte allotment—will receive the most use supervision work this coming year. The Whitehorse Butte allotment will be under a new allotment management plan (AMP), which provides that some pastures rested for the past three years will be grazed.

Project work will be limited in 1992 due to funding constraints. Carry-over work involving the Trout Creek Program will be our highest priority range projects. All Whitehorse Butte allotment projects are scheduled to be completed prior to the implementation of the new AMP in the spring of 1992. Other 1992 projects elsewhere in the resource area may not have sufficient funding to allow their completion which will necessitate rescheduling for the following year.

Eight allotments are scheduled for evaluation in 1992, including 15-Mile Common, Wroten, Albisu-Alcorta, Echave, Jackies Butte, Lodge, Oliver and Sherburn. The following year, there are six allotments scheduled for evaluation: Whitehorse Butte, Willow Creek, Barren Valley, East Cow Creek, Gilbert and Raburn. Evaluation meetings are scheduled between January and April, and evaluation documents normally completed by the summer, of the year allotments are evaluated. If you have any interest or information which may be helpful in the evaluation of these or other allotments, please contact the Jordan Resource Area Manager.

Allotment planning efforts will continue to be emphasized during 1992. Following evaluation of the 15-Mile Common Allotment, an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared to analyze the grazing options for enhancing the allotment's resources. A final decision on the Zimmerman EA is expected during the summer, at which time a draft AMP will be developed. Draft AMP revisions are planned for the Antelope and West Cow Creek allotments because



Aspen and sage brush mosaic in the Trout Creek Mountains WSA Group.

present management does not meet established objectives. All aforementioned allotment planning efforts are scheduled to be completed by September 30, 1992.

Special drought management is expected to continue in 1992. As of January, most of the Jordan Resource Area was showing below normal precipitation. Grazing adjustments may be necessary in some allotments due to lack of water and/or forage. Coordination with grazing permittees will be emphasized to minimize impacts to the environment as well as to permittee operations.

Wilderness

Interim management of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) will continue to be the priority in the wilderness program. Any potential project in WSAs will be evaluated to determine consistency with Interim Management Policy and Guidelines. Ground and aerial monitoring of all WSAs will continue.

Baseline data collection on resource and social conditions will begin in fiscal year 1992 to prepare for wilderness management requirements. Jordan Resource Area recreation staff will stress collecting data for the Limits of Acceptable Change process in the Lower Owyhee Canyon WSA. This will provide needed data for effective management of both the Owyhee River and potential wilderness areas.

Wildlife

During 1992, emphasis will continue in riparian habitat management and monitoring. Special attention will be made

of the effects of renewed cattle grazing, after a three-year non-use period, on portions of the Oregon Canyon and Trout Creek Mountain rangelands. Many years of effort by a great number of individuals have gone into the development of a very conservative grazing system to enable continued recovery of the riparian ecosystem.

Upland vegetation will be studied in the continuation of a project initiated last year to better understand the effect of drought on native and introduced grasses.

Recreation

The Owyhee River System will continue to be the Jordan Resource Area's highest priority in recreation management. The management plan for the entire system is scheduled for completion in fiscal year 1992 with implementation beginning the following year. A site plan and brochure for the Soldier Creek Watchable Wildlife Loop Road is scheduled for completion in fiscal year 1992, as is the Willow Creek Hot Springs Site Plan. Both site plans will describe appropriate management actions for these high use areas.

Emphasis will continue on signing roads, access points and use areas. Although the fiscal 1992 recreation maintenance

budget was reduced, special emphasis will be placed on maintaining existing recreation facilities.

Minerals

During 1992 the minerals material program will continue to focus on inventory and standardization of available data. In addition, applications will be processed for mineral materials associated with the maintenance of Malheur County roads, Oregon State highways, Malheur Irrigation District, and BLM roads.

It is anticipated that resource area personnel will process Notices of Intent for mining claims and conduct surface management enforcement inspections at about the same level as previous years.

Cultural Resources

The 1992 workload for the cultural resource program includes fencing of two stone structures relating to homesteading and the Whitehorse Ranch. Work will continue on the Owyhee River cultural sites, including The-Hole-in-the-Ground Petroglyph Site. Interpretive signs will be installed at the Willow Creek Stage Station and Rome Launch Site, the latter to provide cultural resource information of interest to users of the Owyhee River. In general, the high level of support to other resource programs is expected to continue.

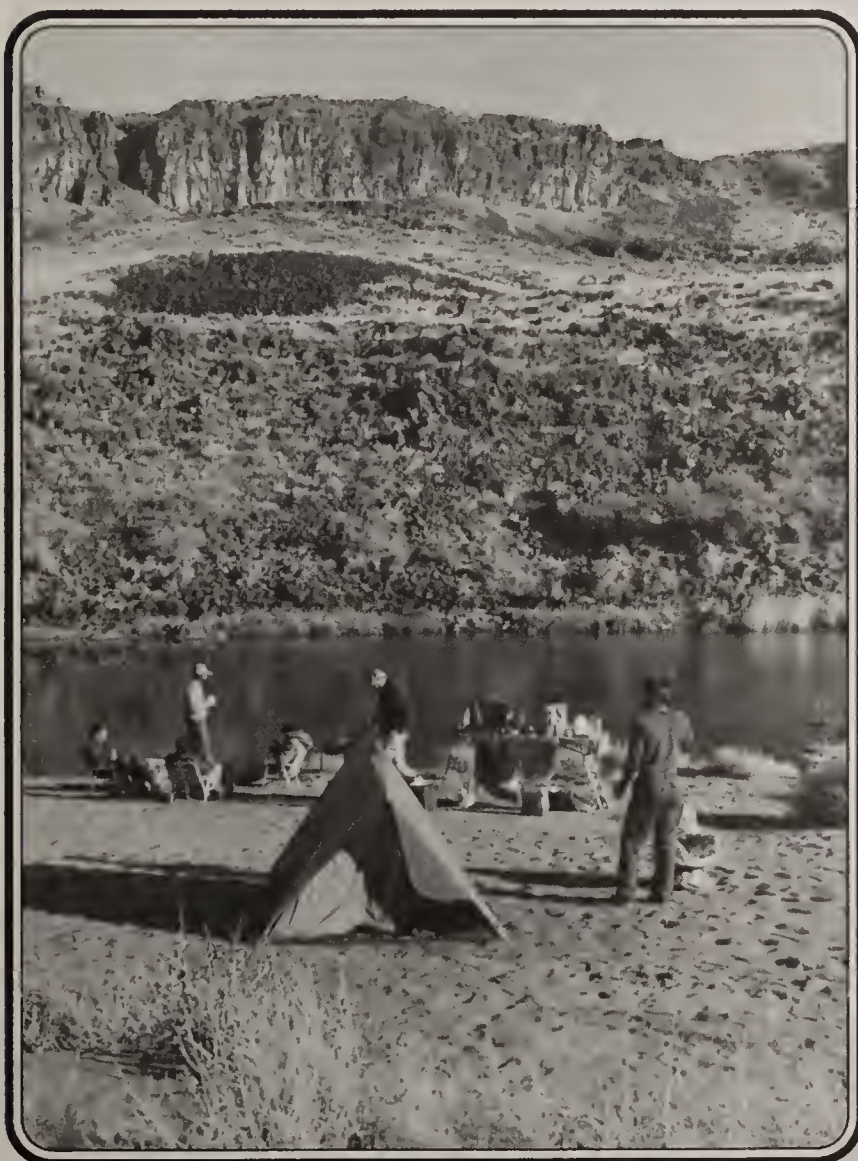
Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

Several sensitive plants will be observed and studied during the growing season to monitor plant growth and reproduction. Plant inventories will be completed for all proposed development activities that involve ground disturbance.

Habitat of the Lahontan cutthroat trout will be intensively monitored. Close cooperation and consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will continue for the development of a recovery plan for the Lahontan cutthroat trout. Additional field studies will be accomplished specific to sensitive animals, such as the kit fox and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Regular monitoring of ACECs will continue during 1992 to ensure management is in accordance with identified standards.



River runners taking it easy on the Owyhee.

Research Natural Areas

Plant and wildlife resource monitoring and research will continue within the Jordan Craters Research Natural Area. Specifically, detailed information will be gathered concerning the pristine vegetation of the western kipuka. Another goal for 1992 will be evaluation of western kipuka data gathered since 1979.

Wild Horses

Horse gathering at Jackies Butte, Sand Springs, and Sheepshead Herd Management Areas is scheduled for early fiscal year 1992. Approximately 335 horses will be removed to bring the population levels within management allocations. Water development for the horses will continue as funding becomes available.

Increased monitoring of the HMAs will be emphasized to determine if any adjustments in population levels are necessary for ensuring a thriving ecological balance between multiple use relationships of the area.

Soils and Watershed

Further aerial photography utilizing color infrared film is planned for Indian, Oregon Canyon and McDermitt Creeks. Photos taken in 1991 will be analyzed to obtain data on vegetation.

Lands and Right-of-Way

One land exchange is proposed for completion in 1992. This proposal is to exchange approximately 1,245 acres of federal lands for a similar acreage of private lands having notable wildlife values.

Work will continue with right-of-way processing for utility lines, short-term agricultural permits, authorization for one landfill, and finalizing of a private land gift donation.

Fire Management

During the 1992 fire season, BLM firefighters and interagency agreements will continue to support suppression of wildfires and man-caused fires within the Jordan Resource Area. Firecrews will also continue to assist the resource area staff with maintenance and construction duties.



Wild horses herd on the move in the Jordan Resource Area.

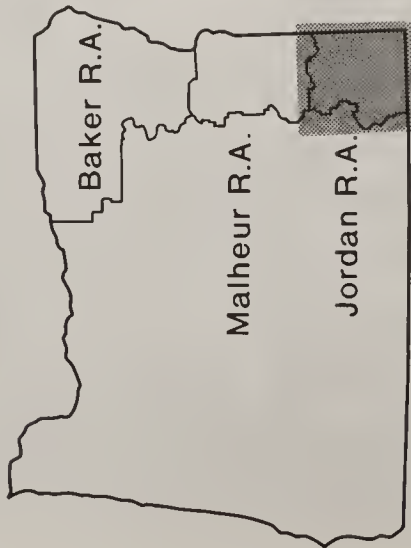
Environmental Assessment Register

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires an environmental analysis of the potential effects of any on-the-ground action or project before its approval. NEPA also requires that the analyses be open to the public.

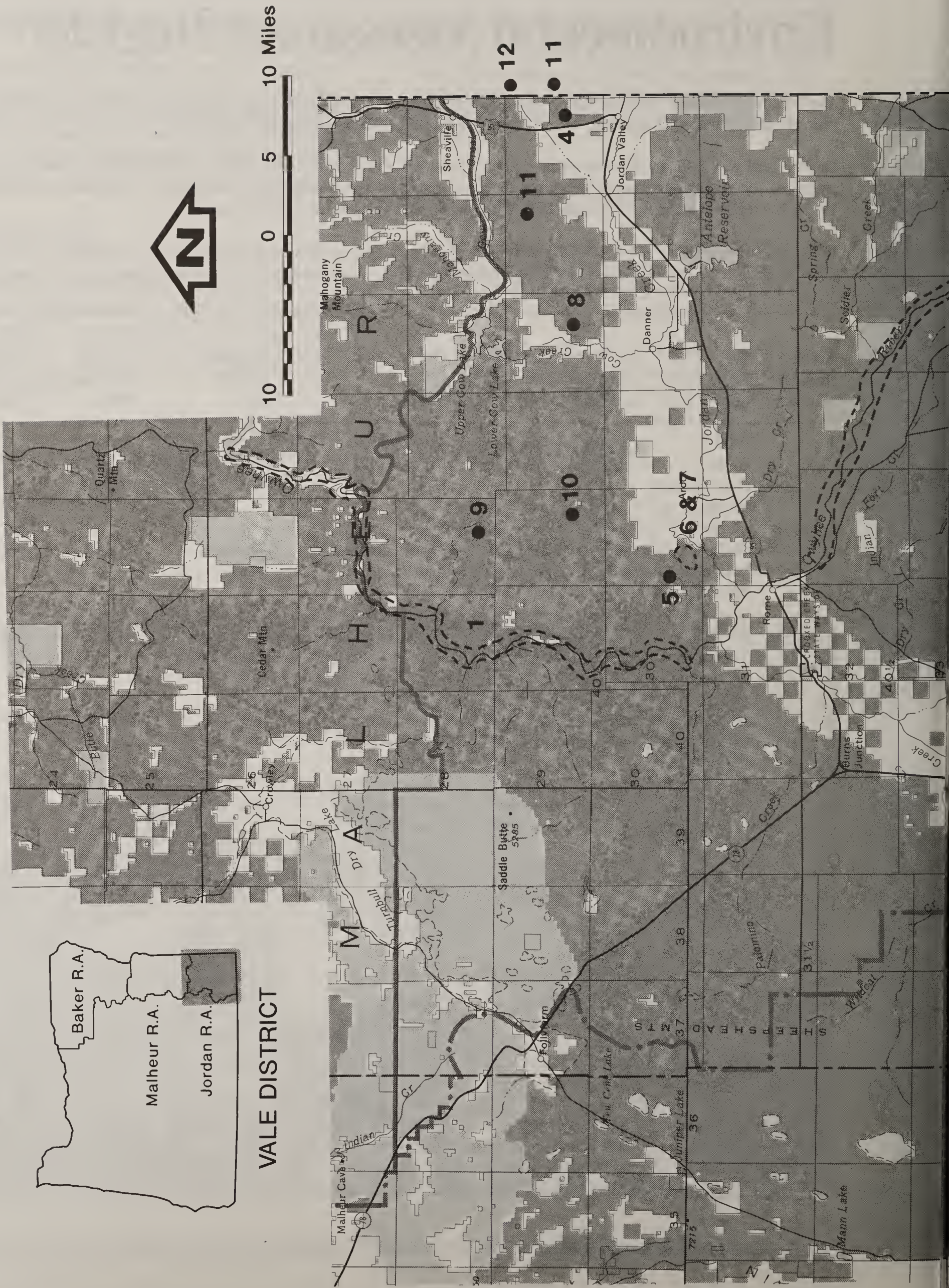
During fiscal year 1992, the Jordan Resource Area will analyze several on-the-ground actions which may occur this year or in preceding years. The following register contains the environmental assessments (EAs) anticipated for completion in fiscal year 1992. The register provides information to facilitate public participation in the analysis process.

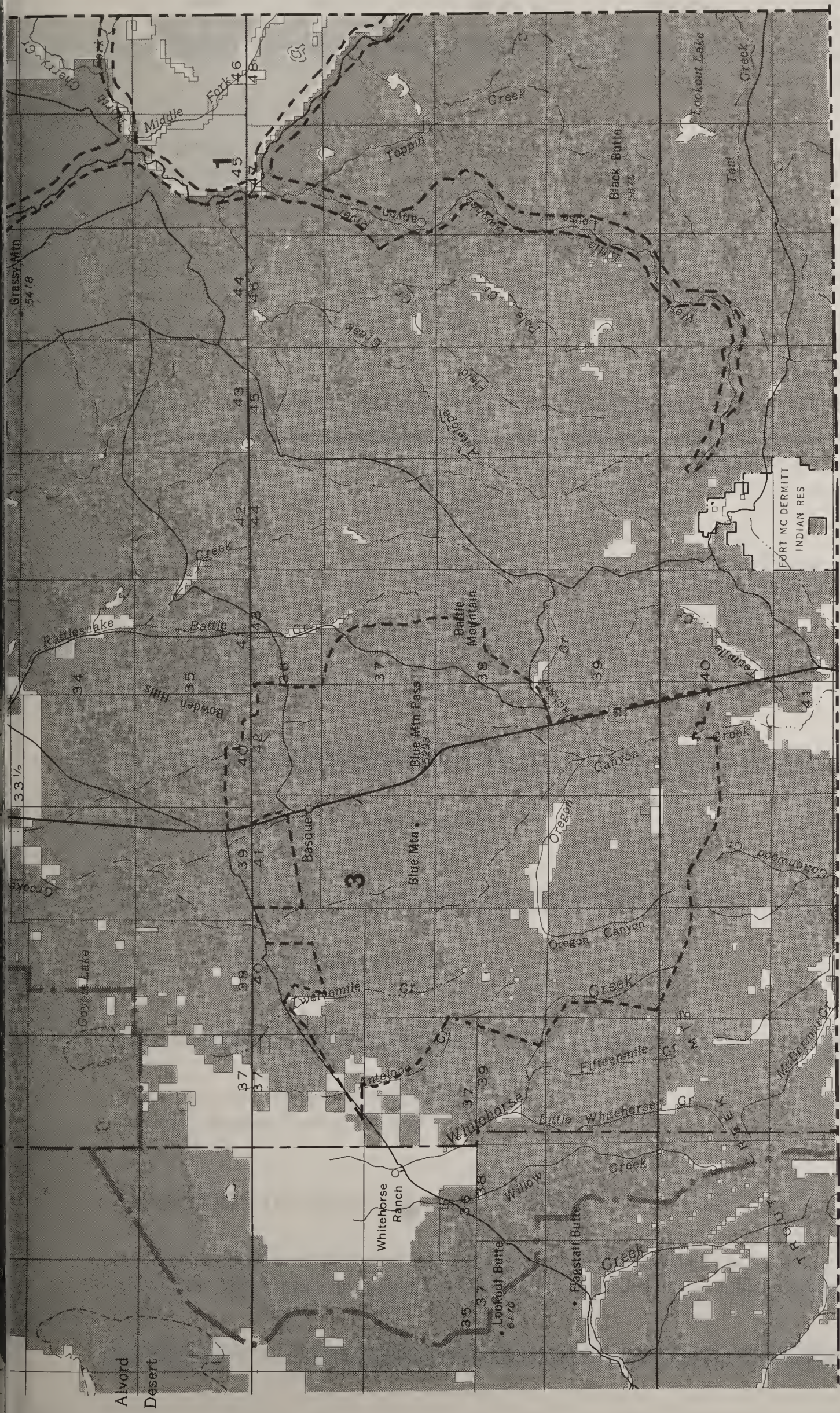
If you wish to receive any of the following EAs, please notify the District Planning and Environmental Coordinator in writing at the Vale District Office. Please include the "Area Register Number" and "Project Name" to receive the EA you are interested in.

Area Register Number	Project Name	Proposed Action	Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EA Completion Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
1	Wild & Scenic Owyhee River System Plan	Implement mangement plan	Main Owyhee, North Fork & West Little	W & S River, ACEC & WSA	7/1992	7/1992
2	Soldier Creek Watchable Wildlife Loop	Implement site plan	Owyhee Overlook & Soldier Creek	National Watchable Area	9/1992	9/1992
3	15 Mile Common Allotment	Develop new grazing system	15 Mile Allotment	Trout Creek Riparian Area	9/1992	9/1992
4	JV North Corral	Construct holding and gathering corral	JV North Pasture East Cow Creek Allotment	None	3/1992	3/1992
5	Arock Pasture Cross Fence	Construct cross fence to split out reseeding pasture	Arock Pasture, West Cow Creek Allotment	None	4/1992	4/1992
6	Arock Reseeding	Reseed Arock South Pasture	Arock South Pasture West Cow Creek Allotment	None	4/1992	4/1992
7	Owyhee Butte Pipeline	Extend the well pipeline and install water troughs	Owyhee Butte Allotment	None	4/1992	4/1992
8	Oliver Pasture Cross Fence	Construct cross fence to split Oliver Pasture	Oliver Allotment	None	2/1992	2/1992
9	Mud Lake Water Project	Install well storage tank and water troughs and extend pipeline	West Cow Creek Allotment	None	2/1992	2/1992



VALE DISTRICT





LEGEND

- District Boundary
- Planning Area Boundary
- BLM Lands
- State Lands
- Private Lands
- Environmental Assessment Area

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management

VALE DISTRICT Jordan Resource Area

1992

Area Register Number	Project Name	Proposed Action	Location	Affected Special Area	Est. EA Completion Date	Est. FONSI Decision Date
10	Dog Lake Water Project	Drill well and install storage tank, pipelines and water troughs	West Cow Creek Allotment	None	2/1992	2/1992
11	Bennett Spring #2 Development	Develop spring and fence riparian area	Bennett North Pasture, East Cow Creek Allotment	None	3/1992	3/1992
12	Bennett Reservoir	Construct reservoir for the Bennett North Pasture	Bennett North Pasture East Cow Creek Allotment	None	3/1992	3/1992
13	Downey Canyon Water Development	Extend pipeline and install three troughs	East Cow Creek Allotment	None	5/1992	5/1992

Appendix A

1991 Completed Rangeland Improvements

Type	Units	Benefiting Activity
Spring reconstruction	8 each	Wildlife/Riparian
New reservoirs	0	
Wells	2 each	Range/Wild Horse
Pipelines	19.3 miles	Range/Riparian
Fences	25.35 miles	Range/Riparian
Fences maintained	10 miles	Riparian
Cattleguards	5 each	Range

1992 carryover and Proposed Rangeland Improvements

Type	Units	Benefiting Activity
Long Draw Pipeline	5.75 miles	Range
Willow Reservoir	1 each	Range/Riparian
Willow Butte Pipeline	9.24 miles	Range/Riparian
Boney Spring	0.25 miles	Range
Buckskin Spring #1	0.25 miles	Range
Rock Creek Reservoir	1 each	Wildlife/Riparian
Basque Pipeline #2	7 miles	Range

Allotment Management Plans Completed in 1991

Whitehorse Butte Allotment Management Plan

Allotment Management Plans Proposed in 1992

Zimmerman Allotment Management Plan

Allotment Management Plans Proposed for Revision in 1992

West Cow Creek Allotment Management Plan

Antelope Allotment Management Plan

Decisions or Agreements in 1991

Denial of Application to shift suspended grazing preference from Mahogany Allotment to West Cow Creek or Jackies Butte Allotments. This decision was appealed to the Administrative Law Judge. A hearing is expected to be scheduled for the Spring of 1992.

Range Program Summary Maintenance

Maintenance of planning documents is an ongoing process. This is the process used to correct any computational or typographical errors and make needed changes to grazing systems, allotment boundaries, number of pastures, etc. The following are corrections or changes that have occurred since the 1986 Range Program Summary (RPS) Update:

Corrections

West Cow Creek Allotment (20902)

According to the 1986 RPS Update (Table 1), the grazing preference was 11,584 animal unit months (AUMs) active and 1,993 AUMs suspended. Grazing preference is actually 9,591 AUMs active and 2,309 AUMs suspended. The 1986 RPS Update was in error because the 1,993 AUMs of suspended AUMs was included in the active preference AUMs. Although those AUMs had been temporarily activated by a 1979 decision they are not permanent active AUMs. They are temporary nonrenewable AUMs when the forage is available. Also, the difference between the 1,993 and 2,309 suspended AUMs is the result of a 1984 shift of use which included 316 AUMs of suspended preference.

Updates

Whitehorse Allotment (11008)

In 1981, Jordan Resource Area regained management of the Whitehorse Allotment from BLM Boise District, Owyhee Resource Area. Planning efforts for this allotment were provided by the Owyhee Resource Area during the late 70s and early 80s. Therefore, the allotment was not included in the Vale District planning process. Planning information from the Owyhee Resource Area is listed below:

White Horse Allotment Planning Information Table

Federal Acres	Category	Big Game AUMs	Wild Horse AUMs	Livestock Active AUMs	Suspended Preference AUMs	EIS Allocation
27,945.4	I	29	0	4,412	0	1,870*
Allotment Number	Primary Objective	Pasture Name System	Present Grazing System	EIS Preferred Grazing		
1108	Improved Ecological Condition	East	Season Long Grazing	Rest-rotation Grazing		
	Improved Ecological Condition	West	Season Long Grazing	Rest-rotation Grazing		

*This figure was the result of a one-time only inventory and therefore was not used for establishing carrying capacity.

Willow Creek Allotment (11004)

Pasture 01 Horse Ridge South name change to Dry Lake.

Pasture 14 Horse Ridge North name change to Horse Ridge.

Pasture 16 Horse Ridge East name change to Ground Hog.

Cherry Creek Allotment (11014) - New Allotment

The fencing of state lands by permittees resulted in formation of a new allotment within the Whitehorse Allotment. The new allotment has 595 acres of public land and 5,338 acres of state land. It has 66 AUMs of Active Preference on the public lands. It will be categorized as a Custodial or "C" allotment due to the satisfactory condition of the public land and the low percentage (less than 10 percent) of public land within the allotment. The federal acreage shown above in the Whitehorse Allotment Table reflects the reduction in acres as a result of this action.

Antelope Allotment (2100)

A new pasture, called Little Pasture, was formed out of a portion of pasture 02 Antelope East.

Allotment Evaluation

Whitehorse Allotment (11008)

Concerns: There is a decline in the vigor and productivity of the key forage plants which is causing concern. Livestock distribution is not satisfactory, and there is no deferment of grazing use during the critical vegetative growing season. Allotment boundaries and acreage need to be checked, and reservoirs may also need maintenance. The permittees want separate use areas. Grazing use needs to be coordinated with Owyhee Resource Area of the Boise District which has a bordering grazing allotment.

Recommendations: Check allotment boundaries and acreage specific to use. Check allotment reservoirs for maintenance needs. Evaluate division of the Allotment into separate use areas in future allotment management plans. Initiate development of a grazing system with the Boise District, and in the interim develop[a grazing system to satisfy resource concerns identified in the evaluation.

=====

1997

=====

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 50, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

VALE DISTRICT OFFICE
100 OREGON STREET
VALE, OREGON 97918

OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed,
Address Correction Requested

FIRST CLASS
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Bureau of Land Management
Permit No. G-76